

ALLGEMEINE REISEINFORMATIONEN

ESSENTIAL TRIP INFORMATION

Your trip will be operated by our trusted partner Intrepid Travel and includes travellers from all over the world.

Physical rating

Many of the North American national parks that we visit have hiking opportunities where walks up to 4 hours can be an option for you. There are often easier options too.

Joining point

Accent Inn Vancouver Airport
10551 St. Edwards Drive Roman St. Germain, Richmond
Vancouver
V6X 3L8
CANADA
Phone: 604 2733311
Fax: 604 2739522

Joining point instructions

The hotel offers a free 24-hour shuttle service. Courtesy shuttle pick-up and drop-off areas are located at the green canopy outside of Arrivals Level 2 International Terminal and outside the Arrivals Level 1 Domestic Terminal. The shuttle runs every half hour.

Problems and emergency contact information

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip. We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please ask the leader to speak to their direct manager. In case of a genuine crisis or emergency, you can reach our local office on the number below:

Local Operator: +1 778-970-0225

Finishing point

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Itinerary disclaimer

ITINERARY CHANGES

Our itineraries are updated regularly throughout the year based on customer feedback and to reflect the current situation in each destination. The information included in this Essential Trip Information may therefore differ from when you first booked your trip. It is important that you review this information prior to travel so that you have the latest updates. Due to weather, local conditions, transport schedules, public holidays, or other factors, further changes may be necessary to your itinerary once in-country. The order and timing of included activities in each location may also vary seasonally to ensure our travellers have the best experience. Your tour leader will keep you up to date with any such changes once on tour.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

A selection of optional activities that have been popular with past travellers are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only for some of what might be available. Prices are approximate, are for entrance only, and don't include transport to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. All activities are subject to availability, and maybe on a join-in basis. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, so some pre-planning for what you are most interested in is advised. When it's recommended that travellers pre-book these activities, look for a note in the Special Information section of the day-to-day itinerary. For most, they can either be organised independently on the day, or let your leader know you are interested in the Group Meeting and they can assist.

Where activities are considered medium or high risk, we work with operators whose safety and credentials we have sighted and assessed. Although it is possible that you may find the same activity cheaper with another operator on the ground, we cannot vouch for the safety or quality of that operator. Medium and high-risk activities not listed above have not been assessed by us and as such our staff and leaders are unable to assist you with organising these activities. Activities that contravene our Responsible Travel policies are also not listed. Please remember that the decision to partake in any activity not listed is at your own discretion and risk.

Important notes

1. This trip starts with a welcome meeting at 6pm on Day 1 in Vancouver. This trip ends on arrival into Vancouver on Day 15 afternoon. The arrival time depends on each group, but we generally aim for a 3pm arrival. If you decide to fly out this day, please don't book a flight before 8pm which will give you enough time to catch a shuttle from the hotel to the airport and be there 2 hours before departure.
2. A Single Supplement to have your own room is available on this trip, but excludes nights 7 & 8 (Jasper National Park) and nights 9, 10 & 11 (Banff National Park) where you will be in shared accommodation. This is due to the availability of campsites and campsite space in these locations where Canadian National Parks are very strict about the

number of tents per site. A Single Supplement on nights 2 & 3 (Whistler) may mean you are accommodated at a separate campsite a short walk from the group's campsite, depending on the available space.

3. A sleeping bag is required for this trip.

4. Please note that the legal drinking age in the US is 21 and in some parts of Canada it's 19.

Medical and health information

GENERAL HEALTH

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to manage and enjoy our style of travel. Please note that if in the opinion of our group leader or local guide any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, we reserve the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements as they may not easily be obtained while travelling.

HEALTH SCREENING

If you are unwell prior to travelling, please stay at home and contact us to make alternative arrangements. At the group meeting, you will be asked to complete a self-screening health form and report any COVID-19 symptoms as well as any close contact with someone who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19. If you are displaying any symptoms or have any health concerns at this time, we will follow the advice of local health authorities to determine whether medical assistance, isolation or further action is required. It's quite possible that the destination country may have different or more strict protocols in place in relations to a Covid-19 case from your home country. This may include hotel or hospital quarantine or quarantine for the group. Please check your government's travel advice or contact the closest embassies to find out the details. We ask all travellers to continue to monitor their health throughout their travels and report any relevant symptoms to their tour leader.

PERSONAL MEDICATION

Medical prescriptions written outside of the US and Canada aren't accepted at local pharmacies. We recommend you bring along your personal medications in the necessary quantities for your trip.

DEHYDRATION & SUN PROTECTION

The most likely medical incidents to occur on our trips are dehydration, over exposure to the sun and twisted ankles from walking on uneven ground. While hiking please ensure you drink enough water to remain hydrated as some hikes don't have refill stations for your water bottles. The sun (especially in desert areas in the West) can be harsh, particularly in the warmer months. Ensure you apply adequate sunscreen and wear a hat.

Food and dietary requirements

While travelling with us you'll experience the vast array of wonderful food available in the

world. Your group leader will be able to suggest restaurants to try during your trip. On our camping trips we often cook the region's specialities so you don't miss out. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat, generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There's no obligation to do this though.

CAMPING

On our camping trips in North America, we operate an optional kitty, where travellers are encouraged to contribute to a central fund which is used to buy groceries which then supply meals to the entire group. More details of the estimated costs and exclusions can be found in the Money Matters section.

Buying and cooking the food, washing up, etc are shared amongst everyone on the trip. Teams of two people will carry out the camp duties on a rotating basis. On camping nights, we usually cook our evening meals together on our own stove, or barbecue food over the camp fire. We usually prepare salads, grill meats and cook pasta, rice and vegetables. For breakfast we usually buy milk, coffee, tea, cereals, bread, jam, butter etc.

Travellers with dietary requirements may prefer to opt out of the kitty, purchasing and preparing food that is suitable to their individual needs.

Accommodation

Camping (with basic facilities) (1 night), Camping (with facilities) (12 nights), Hotel (1 night)

NORTH AMERICA CAMPING

The campsites that we use are selected for either their scenic beauty, their convenient location to places of interest and/or the facilities available. We aim to offer you a selection of different types of campsites.

If you've never camped before - no problem! We provide a complete set of camping and cooking equipment. This includes roomy easy-to-pitch tents, which are shared by only two people and are equipped with thin foam rubber mattresses and vinyl floors. Your leader will show you how to pitch a tent on the first day. On many trips we also spend a few nights in reasonably priced hotels/motels/hostels (as per the itinerary).

Remember that sleeping bags are not provided. Check out the Packing section for more information.

You'll find the necessary facilities - toilets and in most cases showers, washing machines and dryers - at many of our campsites. The showers at some campsites only have cold water available and some may require a payment (usually no more than US- for a quick shower). This is payable locally and is a contribution towards the cost of a limited water supply. Some campsites won't have any facilities, but this will rarely be for more than one night at a time. This is true of many campsites within Yosemite National Park, so if your trip is visiting this park, please prepare to go without a shower on this night, although it can often be arranged to stop and utilise facilities on our way out of the park.

In all campsites there are strict quiet hours when no loud noise is allowed. This means that all music, singing and group gatherings must stop. We request that all our travellers respect these campsite rules.

For trips where there are lodges/cabins used, couples travelling together may be separated as our rooming arrangements are based on single gender.

Our high-quality camping equipment (including tents) can be affected by bad weather conditions. This can result in some wet and cold conditions inside the tent. Your spirit of adventure and flexibility will help make your adventure trip an exciting and unforgettable experience. On nights where the group is camping, and weather conditions are extreme (such as snow or heavy rain), there may be an opportunity for the group (if everyone agrees) to stay at an alternative location such as a nearby hostel or hotel. When this is the case the upgrade is at your own expense.

CAMPING OUTSIDE THE SUMMER MONTHS:

Our trips extend beyond the traditional vacation months (June - September). This is because over the years we've recognised there's a demand from our travellers for trips outside this period. Many enjoy the experience of North America in the snow, or in the crisp and clear atmosphere of spring. We've operated successful trips throughout the year however some consideration must be taken when choosing a trip that travels in the colder months such as:

- Have you got a suitable sleeping bag?
- Do you have suitable warm clothing - fleece, waterproofs, thermals?
- Are your walking and hiking boots waterproof and warm?

You may also like to think about bringing your own camping mat for this period as the double layer provides extra warmth.

In some locations it may be possible to upgrade from camping to cabins if it is cold. You will need to pay for, and arrange this locally and it is of course subject to availability. In some locations it may only be possible to upgrade if the whole group is willing to.

If you come prepared and are willing to experience North America at this very special time of year, then you will be set for a great time.

Transport

Private vehicle

NORTH AMERICA VEHICLES

Our large fleet of vans are fully equipped with dual air-conditioning system, V8 engines and any camping or cooking equipment needed for your trip. Most have cloth-upholstered seats and carpeted interior with radio/tape or CD players. Your luggage is transported in a trailer which is towed behind the van.

The vans are regularly serviced in our own maintenance facility and continuously checked and serviced by a well-established network of maintenance and service facilities throughout the continent. However, unforeseen maintenance problems can still occur while on the road and we appreciate the patience of our travellers as we make necessary

repairs as quickly as possible.

While your group will have a van for all included activities on the trip, the services of the van and the driver may not be available for your use during free time, or after you have arrived for the day. If you need a special trip into town you may need to arrange transport or a taxi.

Money matters

It can be difficult to exchange money while on the road so we suggest that you bring some cash in US dollars/Canadian dollars, or exchange/withdraw money at the airport when you arrive, or at least before you start the trip.

Your individual budget will depend on your personal plans. Think about how much you want to spend on souvenirs, shopping, entertainment, food, drinks, excursions and attractions that aren't included in your trip (eg. helicopter flights etc). Please bear in mind that North America has endless things to do and see. Not all possible optional activities are listed in our Trip Notes.

The cheapest and most convenient way to acquire money is via an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) which are plentiful throughout all cities and towns, and even at roadside stops. This allows you to draw funds from your personal account at a superior exchange rate. Bank fees for these withdrawals can be either a flat rate or a percentage of the amount withdrawn. Check with your bank for information on their international fees.

Don't forget your PIN and make sure you know the telephone number for cancelling your card if it's stolen. Keep this in a safe place. When using your debit card, check your receipts and keep them to compare against your statement when you get home.

Occasionally banks will also allow cash advances on your credit card, but it's not recommended to rely on this method only. We recommend that you carry some cash for situations when ATMs can't be accessed.

SPENDING MONEY

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget an appropriate amount for things like optional meals, drinks, shopping, optional activities, and laundry. Make sure you have read the itinerary and inclusions thoroughly so you know what is included in the trip price and what you may need to pay for while travelling.

TIPPING

If you're happy with the service you receive, providing a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many Intrepid destinations. Please note we recommend that any tips are given directly to the intended recipient by a member of your group as our group leaders are prohibited from collecting cash for tips.

The following amounts are based on local considerations and feedback from our past travellers:

Restaurants: We suggest 18% to 22% of your bill.

Bars: Recommended US for each drink ordered to ensure you are served again.

Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your leader. We suggest US-20 per day for local guides. Ask your leader for suggestions as to what is appropriate for a given activity.

Your Group Leader: You should also consider tipping your leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. Your leader works long and hard for you. He or she may well become your friend during the trip but they do need to pay their bills. If the leader's performance meets or exceeds your expectation they will gladly accept a tip from you. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however you should plan to tip your leader US-7 per person per day.

Another charge not normally listed in North American costs is the state and federal taxes, keep this in mind when your bill comes out slightly higher than the original price listed.

CONTINGENCY FUNDS

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. We reserve the right to change an itinerary after departure due to local circumstances or a Force Majeure Event. In such emergency circumstances, the additional cost of any necessary itinerary alterations will be covered by you. Please note we are not responsible for any incidental expenses that may be incurred as a result of the change of itineraries including but not limited to visas, vaccinations or non-refundable flights. Make sure you have access to an extra US\$ for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last-minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result, there may be some extra costs involved. The recommended amount is listed in USD for the reliability of universal travellers, however, local currency may be needed once in the country to cover these costs.

Packing

LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS:

All luggage is carried in trailers or inside the vehicle so please don't bring more than one medium sized bag, backpack or suitcase (20kg maximum) per person, plus a sleeping bag. Your suitcase/rucksack may get some rough handling, so make sure it's a tough one. A small daypack and camera may also be carried inside the vehicle.

As well as your underwear, toothbrush and other items you always need to pack for travel, below are some items that you specifically need for this trip.

ESSENTIAL

- Sleeping bag. Please bring one from home or purchase one before your trip starts - you may not have time once we're on the road. Sleeping bags can easily be bought in the US and Canada at big stores like Walmart, Kmart, Target or at sports and camping supply stores. Renting sleeping bags isn't possible on our trips. As we offer trips throughout the

year and travel in diverse climate zones, we recommend you carefully consider the weather and choose an appropriate sleeping bag. Please bear in mind that nights can be very cold even in the warmer months. We can experience temperatures as low as -5C and even snow.

- Towel
- Travel pillow
- Reusable water bottle. We recommend at least a 1.5 litre capacity. The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. Tap water in the US and Canada is safe to drink and there are many places to fill up along the way, so please save plastic by bringing your own water bottle.
- Sun protection - hat, sunscreen, sunglasses
- Clothing you can layer. You may encounter a wide variety of temperatures en route due to altitude and unforeseen weather conditions - so be prepared! Make sure to pack a warm fleece and a waterproof jacket. We suggest you check the expected temperatures en route and bring clothing that you can layer.
- Closed-in shoes. As this trip includes camping and/or bush walking we highly recommend that you take a pair of comfortable, closed-in walking shoes. Closed-in shoes will help to protect your feet from cuts and scratches when walking through bush/grass-lands, and will also act as a barrier protection in rare cases against bites or stings from dangerous animals in this environment.

RECOMMENDED

- Power adaptor
- Insect repellent
- Spare camera battery. You should have access to electricity to charge your battery most nights, but as some of the places we stay are a little isolated, it is always a good idea to carry a spare.
- Swimwear
- Head torch
- A simple plastic bag/waterproof toiletry bag (that can hang on a nail on the back of a door) will be useful to keep your clothes dry inside basic camp shower structures.
- Personal medical kit. Your guide will carry a large kit but we recommend you carry items such as mild pain killers, electrolytes, anti-diarrhoeal, antibacterial gel, wet wipes, bandaids/plasters etc.

OPTIONAL:

- Sleep sheet. If you are travelling during the hot season you may wish to also pack a sleep sheet so you will be comfortable no matter what the weather.
- Thermarest. While we provide a basic camping mattress for each client, some travellers find they like the extra comfort of a double layer.
- Ear plugs to guard against a snoring tent-mate
- A good book, a journal or an Ipad for the long drives.

Climate and seasonal information

Please note that Hurricane season is June to October, when landslides, mudslides, flooding and disruptions to essential services can occur. We monitor these situations as they may arise, so that itineraries or activities can be amended as necessary.

Group Leader

Your Intrepid group leader's role involves organising the overall operation and smooth-running of the trip, managing trip logistics and camp responsibilities. They will work to make the trip as safe and enjoyable as possible for all travellers. Intrepid's North American trips are built around the co-operation and participation of all the group members under the supervision of the group leader. On our camping trips, your leader will show the group how to set up and use the camp equipment, and form work groups to take turns cooking, cleaning and shopping. Everyone is expected participate and carry their share of the workload, making camp chores easier. If the whole group participates it will be quicker, easier and more fun.

Your leader will provide basic information about the sights and cities you'll be visiting but please note that our leaders are not 'tour guides' in the traditional sense. They are adventure travel specialists and are there to organise your trip, arrange activities and help with questions or problems you may have while on your tour. Your leader will provide you with all the important information you need to embark on your own explorations.

They are also responsible for driving the van and navigating across the country. The allowable driving times for drivers is strictly controlled in North America. This ensures our drivers are well rested and are not over-tired from too many hours on the roads.

While your group will have a minivan for all included activities on the trip, please note that the services of the van and the driver may not be available for your use during free time, or after you have arrived for the day. If you need a special trip into town you may need to arrange transport or a taxi.

We endeavour to provide the services of an experienced leader however, situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

It's strictly forbidden for non-qualified rangers to present any information about some National Parks in North America, therefore we adopt a system (as requested by the park rangers) where our leader will encourage travellers to visit the information centres in the National Parks for details about the site.

Safety

Most national governments provide regularly updated foreign travel advice on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all destinations and activities on your trip.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, flight tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however, during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests or relax and take it easy. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your our itinerary, and we make no

representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

PETTY THEFT AND PERSONAL SAFETY

While travelling there is always the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy cities. We recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone at night and encourage you to walk together and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares. Be particularly vigilant on public transport. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair or on the floor and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.

UNFENCED CAMPSITES

On some trips you will at times stay in unfenced campsites within National Parks. While this is a fantastic experience, there are a few safety rules to follow. While staying in National Parks it's important that you listen to any advice given by your leader and the park rangers regarding responsible and safe behaviour.

BEARS

Whilst travelling throughout North America it's not uncommon to encounter bears within campsites and national parks. Your leader has been specifically trained for these situations and, if camping, will inform the group on how to 'bear proof' the camp in the evenings or when the site is unattended. There's absolutely no reason to be alarmed by this possibility as it is extremely rare for bears to approach humans.

A couple of rules

Everyone has the right to feel safe when they travel. We don't tolerate any form of violence (verbal or physical) or sexual harassment, either between customers or involving our leaders, partners or local people. Sexual relationships between a tour leader and a customer are strictly forbidden.

Use or possession of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking and expect that you'll abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.

The sex tourism industry is known to exploit vulnerable people and have negative consequences on communities, including undermining the development of sustainable tourism. For this reason, patronising sex workers will not be tolerated on our trips.

By travelling with us you are agreeing to adhere to these rules. You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited, and you also agree to travel in accordance with our Responsible Travel Guidelines.

The decision of the group leader is final on all matters likely to affect the safety or well-being of any traveller or staff member participating in the trip. If you fail to comply with a decision made by a group leader, or interfere with the well-being or mobility of the group, the group leader may direct you to leave the trip immediately, with no right of refund. We may also elect not to carry you on any future trips booked.

If you feel that someone is behaving inappropriately while travelling with us, please inform your tour leader or local guide immediately. Alternatively, contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in the Problems and Emergency Contact section of this Essential Trip Information.

CANNABIS

Cannabis is legal in Canada, however taking it across international borders, including into the United States is illegal. For more information: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/cannabis/>

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part. Due to privacy reasons, we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

This is the beauty of our style of travel: many of our travellers join because they are travelling solo and want to meet and share experiences with like-minded people.

We pair up solo travellers with another traveller of the same gender as per your passport or the information we have in our booking system, so if you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport, please let us know in advance. We also have a Single Supplement available on most trips for travellers who prefer to have their own room.

Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour. Pre-trip and post-trip accommodation booked through us will be on a single room basis.

Some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on an open gender, multi-share basis and where applicable this will be specified in our Essential Trip Information.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all our trips for those travelling internationally. We require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. If you are travelling within your home country or region please confirm before travel that you are entitled to access the public medical system easily should an accident occur. We strongly recommend all travellers have a policy that also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage or personal effects. For international trips, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24-hour emergency contact number has been sighted by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number, and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and your credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

Travellers who reside within the European Union or Switzerland receive basic international health insurance, so travel insurance is not mandatory under European Union Law. However, as this does not cover situations such as emergency rescues, private health care, or repatriation to their home country, comprehensive travel insurance is strongly recommended. European Union or Swiss travellers who decline travel insurance when travelling outside of their home region must sign a Travel Insurance Waiver Form at the Group Meeting.

Responsible Travel

Our Responsible Travel Policy outlines our commitment to preserving the environment, supporting local communities, protecting the vulnerable, and giving back to the places we travel. All our trip leaders, suppliers, and staff are trained on these principles and are core to us delivering sustainable, experience-rich travel.